Today will go down in my personal history of teaching 5th grade as a day of redemption. I failed miserably on the first day, but I learned from my mistakes and had the best second day possible!  
  
First of all, last night I completely scrapped all my original plans. I was at school until 9:00ish for the 2nd day in a row, and I don't regret a second of the time I spent. Not that it took me 6 hours to change plans, by the way. I never can really get started doing anything productive until an hour after school ends. When I finally got down to writing yesterday's entry (about half-way through), I ended up gladly pausing to have a delightful conversation with my favorite fellow teacher at school: [Thomas Maerke](http://mundanebrain.blogspot.com/). After listening to him explain what he was currently reading, I was convinced I need to learn more about international soccer clubs & watch some documentaries.   
  
**Anyway, so I have less than 1/2 an hour to write this because I'm at Panera, and it's about to close. I really want to get everything down about today, so I can have it down in writing.**  
  
**Be prepared for extreme messiness..and perhaps blandness because I'm simply recording what happened today.:**  
  
For morning work, I created this 4-square reflection sheet in which they had to fill out the top two: their thoughts and opinions about the 1st day of school and ideas/suggestions for improvement. Tomorrow they'll be filling out the other two blocks about today, so I can see if they noticed the difference.  
  
Immediately afterward, I explained how we would be taking turns doing classroom minutes daily. With great enthusiasm, I explained how we used it in the [Ozarks Writing Project Summer Institute](http://owp.missouristate.edu/), passed around examples from the SI, and then I shared mine about yesterday. I showed them the spiral "Minutes" steno pad they'll be using to write their notes, and before I shared my Wordle about it, I read my 2 pages of notes. I then took volunteers for the rest of this week and next, and I was shocked at how over half the class eagerly wanted to do it first. I'm *really* looking forward to seeing how the student who took notes today will present his minutes. He absolutely has the worst attitude about writing, and yet, the entire day today he was taking notes about what was going on. When we switched for Social Studies and I had the other 5th grade class for Science, I noticed he took the notebook with him.   
  
We still had to review the homework policy, and I decided to go ahead and finish the PowerPoint from yesterday with the students filling in the blanks.... however, I spiced things up this time. Through carefully watching the time, every 5 minutes I had them get up and we did this new classroom game (from Kagan's book [Goofy Games & Silly Sports](http://openlibrary.org/books/OL9663645M/Silly_Sports_and_Goofy_Games) ) called "Find a Partner" --pg 152. (First I modeled with a couple students how it worked, of course, & then they did it.)Basically, it involved me telling them to quickly find a partner and stand quietly facing me for further directions: this will be your "soccer" partner, so practice dribbling the ball back and forth or one of you be the goalie and the other a kicker, and so forth; this will be your "painting" partner, one of you holds the canvas and the other hold the palette and pretend to paint on the canvas. Their favorite one, though, was the "photographer" partners in which one of them was the photographer and the other one was the model.  
  
------ I have to stop posting for today because Panera's about to close, but I'll finish the rest of this at home and add it to this post tomorrow.